

## Questioned Documents Unit (QDU) Proficiency Testing

### 1 Scope

Proficiency testing in the QDU applies to all personnel within the unit who are involved in the preliminary examination, examination, and/or technical review and verification of casework. The proficiency testing program will encompass internal and external tests in the disciplines of Document Examination and Impressions (footwear/tires). Proficiency testing records will be maintained in accordance with *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing*.

### 2 Discipline and Frequency

**2.1** All QDU examiners, technicians, and contractors will be proficiency tested annually in each discipline in which they are qualified to perform work.

**2.1.1** Examiners, technicians, and contractors in the QDU are proficiency tested in the following:

Test Participant	Discipline	Test Description	Source
Examiners	Document Examination	Document Examination	External
Examiners	Document Examination	Handwriting/Hand Printing	External
Examiners	Impressions	Footwear Examination	External
Analysts	Document Examination	Electrostatic Detection Apparatus	Internal
Redacted			
Analysts	Impressions	Footwear Make/Model Determination	Internal

**2.2** The QDU will participate in external proficiency testing if it meets the requirements described in the Quality Assurance Manual and Laboratory Operations Manual and will internally test unit personnel whenever an acceptable external test is not available.

### 3 Test Administration

#### 3.1 External Tests

**3.1.1** Two examiners will be designated to take the proficiency tests independently, review them, and determine the acceptable answer parameters/range for the test participants, if applicable. This will be recorded in the case record communication log by the designated

examiner(s) performing the reviews. The *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing* will be followed, and participants will follow appropriate Standard Operating Procedures when participating in proficiency tests.

**3.1.2** Once the answer parameters/range has been established, if applicable, the proficiency tests will be distributed by the Proficiency Test Representative to the other examiners for independent examination. After a proficiency test is completed, an examiner will record their results (on the test provider data sheets if provided) and prepare a written report of their results in Forensic Advantage (FA).

**3.1.3** All examiner proficiency tests will be verified as well as technically and administratively reviewed. The original designated examiners will verify as well as technically and administratively review each proficiency test referring to the *QDU-12 Case Review Evaluation Sheet* (Appendix A), as needed. Refer to the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing* as well as the *QDU Case Records and Review for Cases in Forensic Advantage* for more information on case review and retaining proficiency test records.

**3.1.4** The QDU examiners will electronically submit their results to the external providers and the Proficiency Test Representative will ensure this task is completed.

**3.1.5** When the proficiency test results are furnished to the QDU by the test provider, the technical reviewer will evaluate the test. Appropriate entries will be made within FA in accordance with *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing*.

## **3.2 Internal Tests**

**3.2.1** The QDU will follow the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing* regarding internal proficiency testing, test preparation, and test records within FA.

**3.2.2** Qualified examiners may design and prepare internal proficiency samples and tests. A *QDU-21 Internal Proficiency Test Design* (Appendix B) will be completed and retained for reference purposes with each specific proficiency test. The *QDU-21* will include all pertinent information regarding test design and sample/test preparation as required and set forth by the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing*.

**3.2.3** All reviews and evaluations will be performed by a qualified examiner in Forensic Advantage. All worksheets, **Redacted** and ESDA lift(s) made by analysts for the internal Electrostatic Detection Apparatus proficiency test will be uploaded in the Case Record Object Repository and approved by the test participants. All records will be retained in FA.

**3.2.3.1** For the internal Electrostatic Detection Apparatus (ESDA) proficiency test, a *QDU-24 ESDA Observation Checklist* (Appendix C), may be used by a qualified examiner not participating in the test as a guide in the observation and evaluation of the test performance. The

test participant will evaluate their ESDA lift(s) and an image of the ESDA lift(s) will be added to the Case Record Object Repository, as appropriate.

**3.2.3.2** For the internal Footwear Database Search proficiency test, the SICAR search worksheet will be completed by the analyst and uploaded into the Case Record Object Repository. The search criteria listed by the analyst on the worksheet will be used to evaluate the test.

**3.2.3.3** Redacted

**3.2.4** When appropriate, previous external tests may be utilized as internal tests, provided the examiners or technicians have no knowledge of the previous external test results. The QDU will follow the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing* when using external proficiency test samples for internal proficiency tests.

#### **4 Corrective Action**

The QDU will follow the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing* regarding potential inconsistencies and corrective action taken for any administrative and analytical/interpretive errors identified during the proficiency testing process.

#### **5 Proficiency Test Plan**

The QDU PTR will ensure, in accordance with the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Open Proficiency Testing*, that the proficiency testing plan is updated and includes a representative sample of the components/parameters and equipment/technologies listed with each applicable discipline on the scope of accreditation.

#### **6 References**

*FBI Laboratory Operations Manual*

*QDU Standard Operating Procedures Manual*

*QDU Quality Assurance Manual*

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
6	09/26/19	<p>Section 2.2 deleted “when available from an accrediting body approved provider” and added “if it meets the requirements described in the QAM/LOM” Section 3.1.1 deleted “on the QDU-20 Proficiency Test Representative (PTR) at the start of all proficiency tests. The QDU-20 will include all pertinent information regarding the proficiency test as required by the” “Refer to the QDU-10 for specific evaluation criteria.” and added “, if applicable” “in the case record communication log by the designated examiner(s) performing the reviews.” “The” “will be followed and participants will follow appropriate Standard Operating Procedures when participating in proficiency tests.” Section 3.1.2 added “if applicable” and deleted “n’ in “an” and “informal.” Section 3.1.3 added “verified as well” “verify as well” Section 3.1.5 deleted “and complete the QDU-20” “The QDU-20 will be retained with the test notes.” Section 3.2.2 deleted “C” and added “B” for the Appendix. Section 3.2.3 deleted “Prior to a QDU prepared” “test being issued, a QDU-20, or for an” “D” for Appendix initiated and the test will be distributed by a qualified” “or contractor” and added “For” “the” “Electrostatic Detection Apparatus” added parenthesis around “ESDA” “C” for Appendix, “a” “as a guide in the evaluation of the test” “The ESDA lift(s) will be evaluated and an image of the ESDA lift will be evaluated and an image of the ESDA lift will be added to the case object repository.” Deleted last sentence under Section 3.2.3. Added Section “3.2.4 For the Analyst Footwear Database Search, the SICAR Search worksheet will be completed by the analyst and uploaded into the Case Record Object Repository. The search criteria listed by the analyst on the worksheet will be used to evaluate the test.” <b>Redacted</b></p> <p>Changed original “3.2.4” to “3.2.6” and deleted last four sentences and paragraph and added “All reviews and evaluations will be performed by a qualified examiner in Forensic Advantage.” <b>Redacted</b></p> <p>and ESDA lift(s) will be uploaded into the Case Object Repository and approved by the Analysts. All records will be retained in FA. Deleted original section “3.2.5” and its contents. Changed original “3.2.6” to “3.2.7”</p>
7	04/15/21	<p>Updated section “1 Scope” for clarity and to reflect the new ANAB disciplines. Replaced “category(ies) of testing” with “discipline(s)” throughout the document. Updated table in “2.1.1” to reflect the disciplines listed on updated ANAB Scope and changed “Footwear Database Search” to “Footwear Make/Model Determination”. In section “3.1.3” removed “prior to returning the tests to the Proficiency Test Representative”, edited use of QDU-12 to “as</p>

needed” and updated reference to account for digital records. Removed “by all examiners” from section 3.1.4. Edited name of form in section “3.2.2” to align with LOM terms and removed reference to the form for the criteria. Moved section “3.2.6” up to section “3.2.3” and made sections “3.2.3” through “3.2.5” subsections “3.2.3.1” through “3.2.3.3”. Updated the contents of “3.2.3” and “3.2.3.1” through “3.2.3.3” for clarity and consistency, and renumbered section “3.2.7” to “3.2.4”. Added section “5 Proficiency Test Plan” to address new LOM requirement and edited numbering of section “5 References” to section “6” accordingly. Removed “Appendix A” QDU-12 Legacy form and updated QDU-12 LIMS form. Updated the title of “Appendix B” and revised QDU-21 form. Updated ESDA checklist form (QDU-24) number “5” from reading “not to exceed” to “approximately” to be in alignment with SOP.

### **Approval**

Redacted - Signatures on File

Questioned Documents  
Unit Chief

Date: 04/14/2021

Questioned Documents  
Technical Leader

Date: 04/14/2021

Footwear/Tire Tread  
Technical Leader

Date: 04/14/2021

### **QA Approval**

Quality Manager

Date: 04/14/2021

**Appendix A: *QDU-12 Case Review Evaluation Sheet – LIMS***

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**Appendix B: *QDU-21 Internal Proficiency Design***

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**Appendix C: QDU-24 ESDA Observation Checklist**

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**Appendix C: QDU-24 ESDA Observation Checklist (continued)**

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